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The lead developer of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, which would carry natural gas southeast from the center of West Virginia, says the state's environmental regulators have issued a permit for erosion and sediment control.

Dominion Energy spokesman Aaron Ruby says the Department of Environmental Protection approval is "one of only a few remaining approvals needed to begin construction."

The Exponent-Telegram in Clarksburg reports upland West Virginia tree and vegetation clearing has begun under federal authorization.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission gave project approval in October.

The 600-mile (965-kilometer) pipeline would extend almost 100 miles (160 kilometers) through five counties in West Virginia, then cross Virginia and bend through eastern North Carolina.

Partners in the \$5 billion project are Duke Energy, Piedmont Natural Gas and Southern Co. Gas.

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